

THE CLEVELAND  
MUSEUM OF ART  
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PHOTOGRAPHY CRITIC VICKI GOLDBERG LECTURES ON THE POWER OF  
PHOTOGRAPHY ON FEBRUARY 12

Photography critic and art historian Vicki Goldberg will discuss "The Power of Photography: How Photographs Changed Our Lives" in a free public lecture at The Cleveland Museum of Art on Wednesday, February 12, at 5:45 p.m. As she does in her recently published book, which has the same title as her lecture, Ms. Goldberg will discuss the histories of some of the world's most memorable photographs and their impact on public opinion, law, science, politics, popular culture, and the fate of individuals.

She examines photographs as instruments of discovery, from the first X-rays in 1895 to the first view of earth seen from space, and as witnesses to events difficult to comprehend. Images of the horrors of the German concentration camps of World War II or Ron Haeberle's photographs of the 1969 My Lai massacre in Vietnam, first published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, made the unbelievable undeniable.

Among photographs that helped to create public images or advance careers, Ms. Goldberg examines Matthew Brady's widely distributed 1860 photo of Abraham Lincoln; the famous pinup of Betty Grable in a white bathing suit; Elliott Erwitt's picture of Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev in the "Kitchen Debate." She describes some photos that have become icons or symbols for momentous events: Joe Rosenthal's mythic image of the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima, and the mushroom cloud of the first atomic bomb dropped on Japan.

News photos' power to arouse consciences and gain support for causes is demonstrated in photos of police brutally attacking civil rights marchers in Birmingham, Alabama, which

persuaded many legislators to vote for the Civil Rights Act, or pictures of the Ohio National Guard firing on Kent State University student demonstrators, which fueled the anti-war movement.

Although television has largely usurped the role of the photograph as a witness to news events--Goldberg mentions the difference in the time it took to transmit news of the Civil War and the war in the Persian Gulf--she maintains that "the power of a photograph to open the gates of emotion--and influence events--endures." While television gave us our first views of the assassinations of President Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald, she believes it is the still photographs of those events that remain most vivid in our minds.

Vicki Goldberg's criticism appears regularly in American Photo, Artnews, The New York Times Sunday Magazine, Connoisseur, and other publications. The author of Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography (Harper & Row, 1986), she organized a retrospective exhibition of Bourke-White's work, shown at The Cleveland Museum of Art in 1990, and last lectured at the Museum in March, 1990, in conjunction with that exhibition.

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